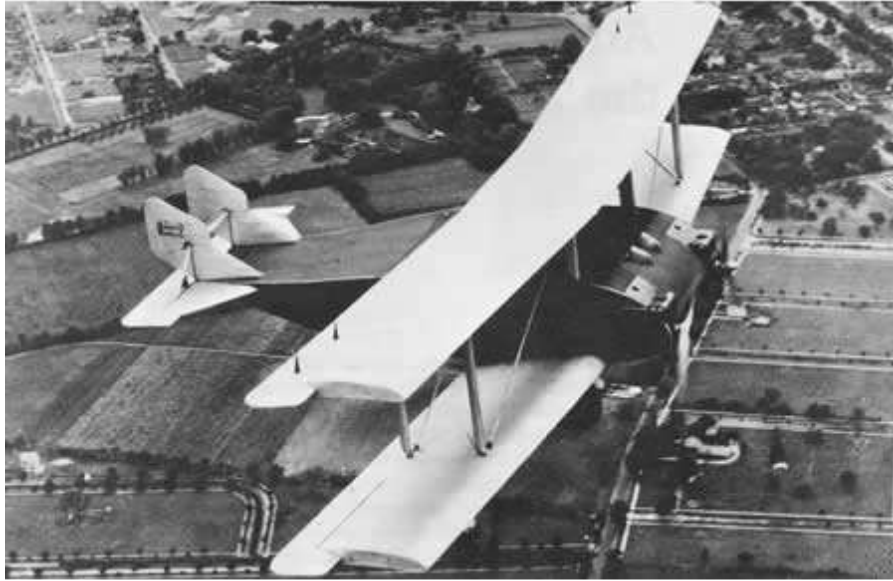


Lift

by

Vixxy Fox



Vincent J. Burnelli was known for his unattractive, but functional "lifting fuselage" transports of the 1920s and 1930s. His RB-2 of 1924 was capable of carrying 6000 pounds of freight, a remarkable feat in its day.

“Why does an airplane fly?” Sergeant Bassmore bellowed at his class.

The question was simple enough but the answer more complex than anyone might ever realize. Private Smallex decided to answer rhetorically; which was a very bad choice. “Why does a fish swim?”

The old Badger growled and pointed to the floor and uttered the word, “Twenty.”

The Fox, scrambling out of his seat, fell to the indicated floor and began cranking out his punishment. As he did this his instructor, deciding to answer his question, moved around to where he could look down upon the young pilot in training. “A fish swims to keep from drowning,” he stated.

“An airplane flies to keep from crashing,” the Fox declared loudly, his voice rising and falling with the movement of his punishment.

“That’ll cost you another twenty,” his instructor growled. “They swim to keep from being eaten.”

“They fly to keep from getting shot down.”

“Twenty more! They swim to catch their food.”

“They fly to shoot down the enemy.”

“Twenty more! They swim to have babies!”

The Fox stopped his pushups at the top of his arms reach and looked up at the Sergeant. “Beg’n your pardon, sir, but they have to stop swimming to do that and airplanes can’t have babies; but they do go into maintenance.”

“Finish,” the Badger growled and then went back to the front of the class. Picking up his pointer he slapped it against the blackboard. “Before any of you pumpkin heads can fly you have to know what causes flight. When you’re up in the sky with a hand on the throttle and the other on your stick... and I do not refer to your private parts... you won’t have time to consider all of the theories involved because you will be watching everything from your instruments to the sky which you will need to do ‘just’ to stay alive.”

As soon as the good Sergeant had gone back to the front of the class, Smallex shaved twenty pushups from his total, finished what he was doing and attempted to climb back into his seat; though he didn’t make it quite that far.

“GET YOR ASS UP HERE AND STAND AT ATTENTION SMART ASS!”

“Sir, yes sir!”

As he scrambled to do as instructed, Sergeant Bassmore picked up a piece of chalk and drew the cross section of a wing with a large curvature to it on the board. Underneath this he drew a flat looking wing with little curvature at all.

There are more than enough theories,” he told the class, dragging out the word ‘theory’ in order to show his disdain for the word, “To explain the concept of lift. You can forget all of them because it’s all just theory, (again the word was dragged out) and nothing is proven. The truth of the matter is simple!”

He slapped his pointer on the curved wing on the blackboard. “CURVED WING; LIFT.”

He next slapped his pointer on the flat wing. “NO CURVE; NO LIFT.”

Turning to his class he told them. “The only thing for certain is that lift occurs through the means of an outside force exerted upon your aircraft. It is not angels! It is not a bunch of little tweety birds gathered under your wings! It is not caused by the counterweight of paperwork generated through maintenance!”

He let this sink in for a second and then said to the Fox standing at attention in a softer somewhat deadly sounding voice, "What is your name Private?"

"Sir, Smallex, sir."

The Sergeant smiled in a friendly manner. "Private Smallex, I am happy at your offer of assistance in teaching my class. Being that you have so offered, we will now demonstrate the principle of lift to said class. Are you agreeable to this?"

"Sir, yes sir!"

"Good. You will now hold your arms out to the diagonal as if they were wings."

Private Smallex was quick to comply.

"That's good," the Sergeant told him, "But you don't exactly look enough like an airplane. Please bend at the waist so we can glean a better idea about the theory of lift seeing you as an airplane sitting on the end of the runway."

Private Smallex again quickly complied.

Moving slightly behind the student, the old Badger looked at the class and bellowed, 'OBSERVE!'; after which he squarely kicked the Private in the ass sending him flying down the center aisle of the classroom where he ungraciously landed upon his stomach.

"Lift is an outside force acting upon your aircraft," the Sergeant told them. "It would also appear that Private Smallex's wings were a little too flat to sustain his flight."

There was a moment of dead silence in the class room after which Bassmore welcomed the cadets to the Army Air Corps and then dismissed them to lunch.

When the company next sat within his classroom there were no further disruptions.